United Nations S/2017/902

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 October 2017

Original: English

Implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is the forty-fourth submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), paragraph 10 of resolution 2165 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2191 (2014), paragraph 5 of resolution 2258 (2015) and paragraph 5 of resolution 2332 (2016), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolutions by all parties to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The information contained herein is based on data available to agencies of the United Nations system[1] and from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as from other Syrian and open sources. Data from agencies of the United Nations system on their humanitarian deliveries have been reported for the period from 1 to 30 September 2017.

II. Major developments

Box 1
Key points in September 2017

1. Despite the reduction in civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure seen following the range of ceasefire and de-escalation agreements that were reached since 4 May, military activities and instances of significant military escalation were reported in many areas, including across Idlib governorate and eastern Ghutah, in Rif Dimashq governorate.

[1] Inputs provided from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Children's Fund, the International Organization for Migration, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations Mine Action Service and the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat.

17-18406 (E) 271017

Please recycle

2. As at the end of the reporting period, the United Nations estimated that 8,000 civilians remain trapped in Raqqah city. Fifty-eight people were reportedly killed by airstrikes or gunfire during the month of September. At least 146 civilians have reportedly been killed by landmines alone since June while trying to flee.

3. On 5 September, the Syrian Ministry of Defence announced that Government forces had broken the three-year-long siege imposed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on the besieged parts of Dayr al-Zawr city, where 93,500 people had been trapped and were relying on air drops for basic assistance.

4. Military operations in Dayr al-Zawr governorate continued to impact civilians. According to the displacement monitoring tracker of the United Nations and its partners, air strikes and clashes resulted in over 100,000 people being displaced, mostly to other parts of Dayr al-Zawr governorate, with about 25,000 people moving to Raqqah and Hasakah governorates. Many of those who remain in Dayr al-Zawr cannot be reached with humanitarian assistance owing to the proximity of fighting or the fact that areas continue to be under ISIL control.

5. The United Nations and its partners received credible reports of eight attacks that impacted health-care facilities and personnel in September, and two attacks that impacted schools.

6. In September, humanitarian inter-agency cross-line convoys reached 34,000 people in the besieged locations of Fu'ah, Kafraya, Yarmouk, East Harasta, Misraba and Mudayra. The total number of people reached under the plan is 280,500, or 23 per cent of the overall number of people to whom access was originally requested under the plan.

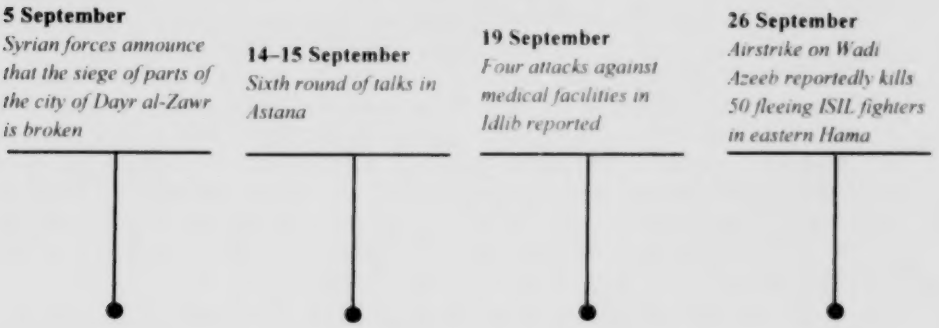
7. The United Nations estimates that, as at September 2017, some 2.98 million people are living in hard-to-reach and besieged locations in the Syrian Arab Republic. That number includes 419,920 people (down from 513,420) living in 10 besieged locations throughout the country. Dayr al-Zawr city, in Dayr al-Zawr governorate, has been formally removed from the United Nations list of besieged locations. Ninety-five per cent of the total besieged population is besieged by the Syrian Government forces.

3. Following the sixth round of talks, held in Astana on 14 and 15 September 2017, the guarantors of de-escalation areas (the Russian Federation, Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran) reached an agreement on operationalizing the Idlib de-escalation area. On 19 September, Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham, led by Jabhat Fath al-Sham (former Nusrah Front), which is designated as a terrorist organization by the Security Council, launched an offensive from Idlib on positions of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in northern Hama. The attack prompted a sustained aerial campaign in north-western Syrian Arab Republic by the Syrian Government forces, supported by the Russian Federation. The United Nations received reports of daily airstrikes and ground-based strikes being launched throughout the governorate, in which a significant number of civilians were killed and injured, including women and children. Civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, were also reportedly severely affected by the strikes according to information received by the United Nations. Tens of thousands of people were also displaced within the governorate owing to the attacks. The Russian-Turkish summit of 29 September resulted in a recommitment to the ceasefire in Idlib.

4. In Raqqah city, the advance of the Syrian Democratic Forces, backed by the United States-led international counter-ISIL coalition and led by the Kurdish People's Protection Units towards the centre of the city, continued to result in the

death and displacement of civilians. The Syrian Democratic Forces control approximately 80 per cent of Raqqah, with an estimated 8,000 civilians still trapped in the ISIL-controlled areas of the city at the end of the reporting period, according to the United Nations. The part of Raqqah city controlled by Syrian Democratic Forces remains largely empty of civilians. Fifty-eight people were reportedly killed by airstrikes or gunfire during the month. At least 146 civilians have reportedly been killed by landmines alone since June while trying to flee the city. Those who remain continue to face a number of serious protection concerns and are at risk of being killed by air strikes, mortar and artillery shelling, snipers and mines, or by being used as human shields. Those trapped inside also face nearly depleted food stocks and limited access to medical facilities, as facilities still in service are reportedly being reserved for ISIL fighters.

Figure I
Key dates in September 2017


5 September
Syrian forces announce that the siege of parts of the city of Dayr al-Zawr is broken
14–15 September
Sixth round of talks in Astana
19 September
Four attacks against medical facilities in Idlib reported
26 September
Airstrike on Wadi Azeeb reportedly kills 50 fleeing ISIL fighters in eastern Hama

5. Military operations in Dayr al-Zawr governorate continued to impact civilians. According to a displacement monitoring tracker of the United Nations and its partners, air strikes and clashes resulted in more than 100,000 persons being displaced, mostly to other parts of Dayr al-Zawr, with about 25,000 persons moving to Raqqah and Hasakah governorates. Many of those who remain in Dayr al-Zawr cannot be reached owing to the proximity of fighting or the fact that areas continue to be under ISIL control. Most of those who fled north into Raqqah and Hasakah governorates are arriving at receiving points for security screening in Abu Khashab and Malha, before moving to camps in Ayn Isa or Arishah in Raqqah and Hasakah governorates, respectively. Throughout the reporting period, about 700 to 800 internally displaced persons entered each camp every day. While humanitarian partners are responding in those locations, additional support is needed, in particular at the receiving points, where thousands of people are gathered while waiting for security screenings.

6. On 5 September, the Syrian Ministry of Defence announced that government forces had broken the three-year-long ISIL-imposed siege of the besieged parts of Dayr al-Zawr city, where 93,500 people had been trapped and were relying on air drops for basic assistance. On 6 and 10 September, food, health and other supplies reached Dayr al-Zawr. On 14 September, the first United Nations supplies arrived in Dayr al-Zawr city by truck. The United Nations supplies, delivered by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, consisted of life-saving items such as wheat flour, hygiene kits, solar lamps, plastic sheeting and kitchen sets for 15,000 families. Additional convoys were deployed on 15, 20 and 27 September. The area, however, remains a front line, with ongoing hostilities leaving sustained access to Dayr al-Zawr city vulnerable to security incidents.

7. Ongoing military confrontations and airstrikes in the Uqayribat subdistrict of Hama governorate against ISIL positions have led to civilian deaths and displacement. Initial displacement following the fighting in August left about 8,200 internally displaced persons trapped in the Wadi al-Adhib area. An additional 4,500 civilians had not managed to leave several villages under ISIL control, south-west of Wadi al-Adhib, later overtaken by Syrian Government forces. The internally displaced persons were without access to humanitarian or medical assistance for more than a month and several reports of malnutrition cases and deaths owing to a lack of medical care have been received. On 10 September, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received reports that about 28 individuals, including 5 women and 13 children (of whom 7 were girls and 2 were boys under 3 months of age), were detained near Wadi al-Adhib while trying to flee ISIL-held areas towards government-controlled areas. Their whereabouts remain unknown. On 26 September, shelling in Wadi al-Adhib reportedly killed 50 people.

8. In Rif Dimashq governorate, fighting and airstrikes continued in Jawbar and eastern Ghutah between non-State armed opposition groups as well as between those groups and the Syrian Government forces. Shelling and armed clashes in Duma, Harasta, Misraba, Mudayra, Kafr Batna and Ayn Tarma reportedly resulted in civilian deaths. Ground-based strikes and armed clashes in both Jawbar and Ayn Tarma were reported to the United Nations on a daily basis. The medical facility in Mudayra was reportedly hit by ground-based strikes on 13 September. The situation resulted in the closure of schools and the suspension of commercial traffic into the area, which further increased prices for basic goods. Bread in eastern Ghutah is now reportedly over 20 times more expensive than in Damascus.

9. During the reporting period, an estimated 50,000 to 55,000 Syrians remained stranded along the Syrian-Jordanian border, in an area known as the berm. The last cycle of aid assistance to that area was halted over four months ago, on 15 June, with the situation of those stranded having continuously deteriorated. The United Nations has continued to urgently seek emergency humanitarian access to make possible the delivery of food and essential non-food assistance in the immediate term.

Protection

10. Air and ground-based strikes continued to kill and injure civilians in significant numbers. As in the past, the high level of civilian casualties remains a strong indication that violations of the prohibition on launching indiscriminate attacks and of the principles of proportionality and precaution are continuing. Children have been particularly affected by the fighting and, in some incidents, have constituted the majority of the casualties.

11. Fighting continued to affect civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities, schools, markets and places of worship. On the basis of information received by OHCHR, civilian casualties occurred in various governorates (see annex), in possible violation of international humanitarian law. OHCHR has documented alleged incidents by many parties to the conflict, including government forces and their allies, non-State armed opposition groups and Security Council-designated terrorist groups.

12. Despite the call made to the Syrian authorities in Human Rights Council resolution 19/22 to cooperate with OHCHR, including through the establishment of a field presence with the mandate to protect and promote human rights, further reporting by the Office remains curtailed by the denial of its access to the Syrian Arab Republic.

13. The United States Department of Defense publicly confirmed that in September, the United States-led coalition carried out 1,302 strikes against ISIL targets in the governorates of Hasakah, Raqqah and Dayr al-Zawr. Nearly 90 per cent of the strikes (or 1,171 air strikes) were reported to have been in the vicinity of Raqqah city. In addition, the coalition reported that it had conducted airstrikes near Mayadin on 4 and from 12 to 14 September.

14. The Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation issued regular statements on the launching of attacks, including through the use of cruise missiles launched from the sea, and statements on airstrikes against ISIL targets in Dayr al-Zawr and Hama governorates, and against Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham targets in Idlib and Hama governorates. The Ministry noted that on 5 September, Kalibr cruise missiles were fired in support of the Syrian army's offensive in Dayr al-Zawr, and that Russian aircraft conducted more than 100 combat sorties. On 6 September, the Commander of the Russian force grouping in the Syrian Arab Republic stated that 1,417 combat sorties had been carried out in the previous two weeks, making 2,687 strikes on command centres, camps and manpower concentrations. On 14 September, the Ministry of Defence stated publicly that earlier that day, submarines had fired Kalibr cruise missiles against targets in ISIL-held areas to the south-east of Dayr al-Zawr.

15. On 12 September, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation publicly stated that Russian Aerospace Defence Forces were conducting 24-hour air reconnaissance to detect and eliminate targets, highlighting the fact that on 11 September, the Forces had flown more than 50 sorties, eliminating about 180 targets. On 26 September, the Ministry stated that cruise missiles had been fired at Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham and ISIL targets in Idlib and Dayr al-Zawr governorates.

16. On 18 September, the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation issued a statement saying that the Aerospace Forces had provided support to Syrian Government troops in taking control of a number of positions near Hussiyah and Sawwanat, Hama governorate, and had used unmanned aerial vehicles to detect and eliminate targets.

17. The United Nations and its health partners received credible reports of eight attacks that affected health-care facilities and personnel in September, of which five have been verified and three are currently being verified. On 9 September, one hospital in Raqqah city was impacted, leading to significant structural damage. On 19 September, four incidents were reported. An attack on a hospital in Kafr Nubl subdistrict, Idlib governorate, resulted in partial damages to the facility. Another attack on a hospital in Khan Shaykhun subdistrict, Idlib governorate, resulted in damages to the facility, as well as damage to several ambulances belonging to the local ambulance system parked near the hospital. An attack on a hospital specializing in maternity and paediatric services in Haysh subdistrict, Idlib governorate, resulted in structural damages to the facility. According to initial reports, one female administrative staff member was killed and another staff member was severely injured. Two paramedics were also reportedly killed after an airstrike on two ambulances near Atshan, in northern rural Hama; the two ambulances were destroyed.

18. Educational facilities also continued to be affected by the fighting. On 21 and 25 September, in Dar al-Kabirah village, Idlib governorate, the Dar al-Kabirah School was allegedly destroyed owing to shelling and airstrikes. In addition, on 24 September, the Risalah School in Habit town, Idlib governorate, was allegedly targeted by airstrikes. It was also reported that most school activities had been suspended for a period of three days throughout Idlib owing to attacks on schools in the area.

Humanitarian access

Box 2
Key points for humanitarian access

1. In September, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all available access modalities, including from within the Syrian Arab Republic, in collaboration with the Syrian authorities. Regular programming resulted in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to millions of people in need, including some 2.6 million people who received food assistance during the month through more than 1,700 deliveries.

2. Cross-border activities remain a vital part of the humanitarian response in the Syrian Arab Republic. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) in July 2014, assistance has been delivered from Turkey to millions of Syrians in various parts of Aleppo, Idlib, Ladhiqiyah and Hama governorates, and from Jordan to Dar'a, Qunaytirah and Suwayda' governorates. In September alone, 410 trucks in 24 consignments delivered much needed life-saving assistance to more than 1 million people in need in northern and southern areas of the Syrian Arab Republic.

3. Dayr al-Zawr city, in Dayr al-Zawr governorate, has been formally removed from the United Nations list of besieged locations.

4. In September five humanitarian inter-agency cross-line convoys delivered much-needed assistance to 34,000 people. The total number of people reached under the August-September plan is 280,500, or 23 per cent of the overall number of people to whom access was originally requested under the plan.

5. The removal and delisting of medical supplies from inter-agency cross-line convoys remained a major challenge, with supplies sufficient for more than 22,284 treatments removed or not allowed to be loaded in September (see table 2). That brings the total number of medical items removed or not allowed to be loaded to more than 620,000 since the beginning of the year.

19. After three years of besiegement by ISIL, Syrian Government forces gained access to Dayr al-Zawr city in early September. New commercial and humanitarian routes have been opened and the United Nations, through its partner, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, has been able to reach the area by road. As a result, Dayr al-Zawr city has been removed from the United Nations list of besieged locations and the United Nations was able to end the airdrops which, through 309 high-altitude rotations since April last year, dispatched more than 6,030 metric tons of food and supplies to those in need inside Dayr al-Zawr city.

20. The United Nations estimates that, as at September 2017, about 419,920 people (down from 513,420) are living in 10 areas under siege (see table 1). That means that the area is assessed by the United Nations as being surrounded by armed actors, with the sustained effect that humanitarian assistance cannot regularly enter, and civilians, the sick and the wounded cannot regularly exit. Of the 10 besieged locations, 7 areas are besieged by the Government (95 per cent of the total besieged population), 1 by both the Government and non-State armed opposition groups (3 per cent of the total besieged population) and 2 by non-State armed opposition groups (2 per cent of the total besieged population). In addition to those in besieged locations, about 2.56 million people are estimated to be living in hard-to-reach locations. That figure is down from the previous estimate of 2.9 million people as a

result of movements and further access improvements in Aleppo, Raqqah and Hasakah governorates.

Table 1
Besieged locations, September 2017

Governorate	*Location*	*Population*	*Besieged by*
Damascus	Yarmuk	12 520	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and non-State armed opposition groups
Idlib	Fu'ah	5 900	Non-State armed opposition groups
Idlib	Kafraya	2 200	Non-State armed opposition groups
Damascus	Qabun	2 500	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rif Dimashq/ Damascus	Irbin and surrounding area (Irbin, Zamalka and Jawbar)	49 300	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rif Dimashq	Harasta area (Harasta, Mudayra and Misraba)	59 000	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rif Dimashq	Duma area (Duma, Shaffuniyah and Hawsh al-Dawahirah)	150 100	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rif Dimashq	Kafr Batna area (Kafr Batna, Saqba, Ayn Tarma, Hammurah, Jisrayn, Aftris, Hazzah, Hawsh al-Ash'ari, Bayt Siwa and Muhammadiyah)	125 600	Government of the Syrian Republic
Rif Dimashq	Nashabiyah area (Nashabiyah, Bayt Nayim, Salihiyah, Utaya and Hazrama)	9 300	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Rif Dimashq	Bait Jinn	3 500	Government of the Syrian Arab Republic
Total		**419 920**	

21. The delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need remained extremely challenging in many areas of the country as a result of active conflict, shifting conflict lines, administrative impediments and deliberate restrictions imposed on the movement of people and goods by the parties to the conflict. In particular, access by the United Nations and its partners to those people living in besieged and hard-to-reach locations remains a critical concern.

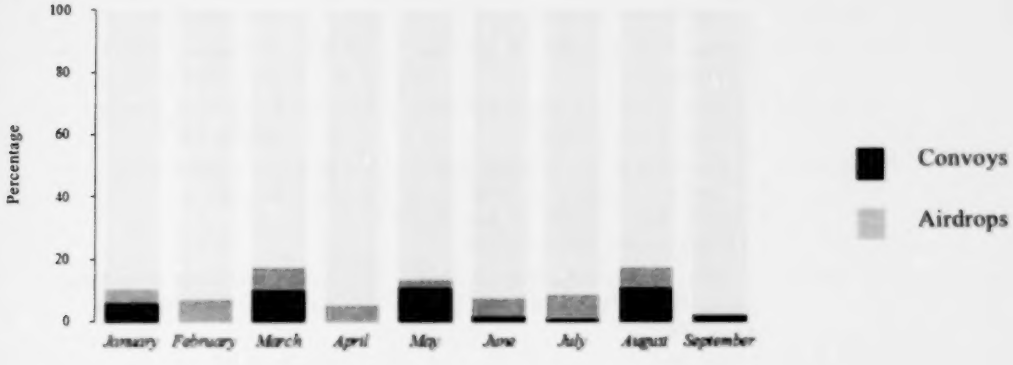
22. The United Nations inter-agency convoy plan for August and September requested access to 36 locations in besieged and hard-to-reach areas, seeking to reach 1,231,000 people. Inter-agency convoys are prepared for areas with multisectoral needs where access is limited, to ensure that United Nations support is needs-based. In September, only five inter-agency convoys could be dispatched to besieged and hard-to-reach locations, reaching 34,000 people in need (see table 4 for a list of inter-agency convoys sent in September). That brings the total number of people reached under the August-September plan to 280,500, or 23 per cent of the overall number of people to whom access was originally requested under the bimonthly plan. That number does not include convoys carrying supplies delivered by other humanitarian actors.

23. Individual agencies continued to submit requests for single-agency deliveries during the reporting period to locations throughout the country. Single-agency

deliveries take place in areas where access is possible; there are therefore fewer concerns about the ability of the United Nations to address assessed needs in those areas. In September, the World Food Programme (WFP) submitted 1,715 official requests to obtain facilitation letters for the transport of food assistance to targeted locations throughout the country, all of which were approved. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) submitted 47 facilitation letters for the movement of core relief items and livelihood kits, of which 46 were approved. Moreover, both international and Syrian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to undertake needs assessments and to provide support (including medical, educational, psychosocial and protection services) in besieged and hard-to-reach locations, under extremely challenging circumstances and in accordance with humanitarian principles.

Figure II

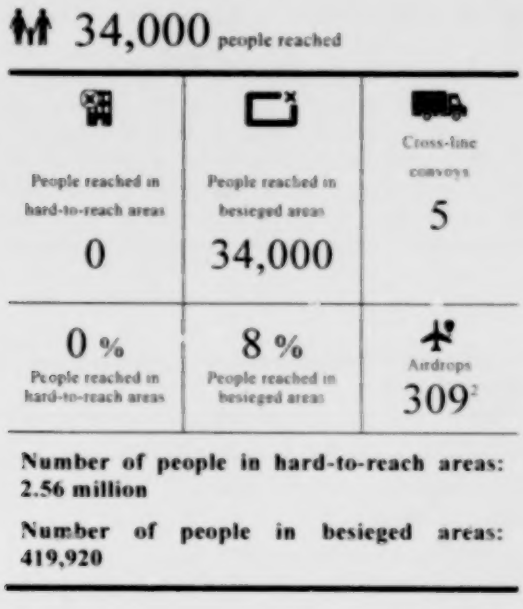
United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations: percentage of people reached each month in besieged areas



24. During the reporting cycle, the majority of agencies of the United Nations system and United Nations partners continued to be unable to gain access to populations in need in areas of the country controlled by ISIL, as all plans to deliver assistance to those areas have been suspended as a result of continued security concerns. That state of affairs has prevented the United Nations and its humanitarian partners from reaching Raqqah city and most of Dayr al-Zawr governorate, as well as pockets of rural Homs and rural Hama.

25. Land deliveries to the north-eastern governorates through the Aleppo-Manbij route proceeded in a regular manner in September. Through those deliveries, the United Nations provided food and nutrition assistance to nearly 390,000 people in Hasakah and Raqqah governorates, as well as to accessible parts of north-western Dayr al-Zawr governorate. Increased deliveries through that route enabled the United Nations to respond to the immediate needs of families fleeing violence in Raqqah city, where an estimated 8,000 people — more than half of whom are children — were facing deteriorating humanitarian, health, living and security conditions. Displacement continued to be reported daily owing to heavy airstrikes and fierce fighting, with about 300,000 persons already displaced in Raqqah governorate since November 2016. The United Nations and its partners have been responding at scale to the needs, providing assistance to displaced persons and host communities in at least 58 sites, camps and/or areas of high concentrations of internally displaced persons in Raqqah, Aleppo, Hasakah and Dayr al-Zawr governorates.

Figure III
United Nations inter-agency cross-line humanitarian operations by land, September 2017



Life-saving and life-sustaining medical items sufficient for more than 22,284 treatments were rejected or removed from convoys in September by the Syrian authorities according to WHO and other health partners. Details regarding the treatments and supplies removed are shown in table 2. Additional medical supplies were scheduled to be delivered as part of the bimonthly inter-agency convoy plan, however only five inter-agency convoys were able to proceed in September. Furthermore, since the beginning of 2017, WHO has submitted 10 single-agency requests to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to gain access to 14 locations in 6 governorates. The Government has approved nine requests and one has been rejected.

Table 2
Medical supplies removed from humanitarian convoys in September 2017

Location	*Number of treatments*	*Types of supplies*
Yarmouk	862	Atropine, psychotropic medicines and medicines for other common symptoms in palliative care and medical equipment, including ultrasound systems
Fu'ah and Kafraya	262	Minor surgery instruments, surgical kits and medical consumables from burn kits and pneumonia B kits
East Harasta, Misraba, Mudayra	21 160	Phenobarbital, amitriptyline, hydrochloride, haloperidol, gastro-resistant sodium valproate, ketamine hydrochloride, carbamazepine and beclomethasone dipropionate nasal spray

[2] Airdrop operations to Dayr al-Zawr city were discontinued in early September, as recent military developments in and around the city enabled the United Nations and its partners to resume land access.

Humanitarian response

26. In September United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners continued to reach millions of people in need through all available access modalities, including (a) regular programming from within the Syrian Arab Republic, where humanitarian deliveries reach those in need without crossing conflict lines, (b) cross-line convoys, where assistance from Damascus is delivered across conflict lines, and (c) cross-border deliveries, where assistance is provided to those in need from Jordan and Turkey (see table 3). In addition to the United Nations and its partners, NGOs continued to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Moreover, the Government continued to provide basic services both in areas under its control and in many areas beyond its control. Local authorities in many areas controlled by non-State armed opposition groups also continued to provide services when possible.

Table 3
People reached by the United Nations and other organizations through all modalities in September 2017

Organization	*Number of people reached*
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	22 674
International Organization for Migration	44 556
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	225 631
United Nations Children's Fund	>1 500 000
United Nations Development Programme	116 125
United Nations Population Fund	497 985
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East	438 000
World Food Programme	>3 300 000
World Health Organization	805 095

27. During the reporting period, cross-border deliveries continued from Turkey and Jordan into the Syrian Arab Republic under the terms of Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015) and 2332 (2016) (see figure IV for details). In line with those resolutions, the United Nations notified the Syrian authorities in advance of each shipment, including its content, destination and number of beneficiaries.

28. Since cross-border operations began in July 2014, following the adoption of resolution 2165 (2014), the United Nations has conducted more than 640 cross-border consignments, with more than 16,424 trucks (11,580 via Bab al-Hawa and 1,554 via Bab al-Salam from Turkey; and 3,290 via Ramtha from Jordan). Through those operations, the United Nations and its partners delivered health assistance sufficient for nearly 15 million treatments (including vaccinations for more than 2 million people), non-food items for nearly 4 million people and water, sanitation and hygiene supplies for 3 million people. Moreover, in the last two years, nearly 1 million people have received food assistance in areas of northern and southern Syrian Arab Republic through cross-border operations each month. Assistance has been delivered to various parts of Aleppo, Idlib, Ladhiqiyah and Hama governorates from Turkey, and Dar'a, Suwayda' and Qunaytirah governorates from Jordan. Those operations complement the critical role played by international and Syrian NGOs that provide assistance and services to millions more from neighbouring countries.

29. In September, for example, the Organization delivered food assistance for more than 852,000 people through cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan. The United Nations and its partners also provided a total of 268,000 medical and health treatments to 140 health facilities in northern and southern Syrian Arab Republic through cross-border operations. More than 473,000 people in southern Syrian Arab Republic benefited from improved access to clean water through maintenance operations of water and sanitation systems. Of those, 22,086 people benefited from humanitarian and emergency water, sanitation and hygiene interventions, such as household water treatment, distribution of hygiene kits, water trucking and latrine installations, improving access to adequate sanitation. In addition, United Nations nutrition partners continued to provide services to more than 9,400 beneficiaries in 17 communities in Dar'a and Qunaytirah governorates. More than 168 cases of moderate acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition were treated through the Organization's therapeutic and supplementary nutrition programme. More than 3,800 children under 5 years of age received preventive nutrition services (micronutrient powder) and an additional 1,677 children were reached with structured and sustained child protection and psychosocial support services. Moreover, the United Nations Population Fund and its implementing partners assisted 27,822 people in hard-to-reach locations throughout the Syrian Arab Republic, providing services relating to reproductive health and gender-based violence.

30. The United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic continued its operations during the reporting cycle, monitoring 410 trucks used in 24 consignments by seven United Nations entities in September, confirming the humanitarian nature of each and notifying the Syrian authorities after each shipment. The Mechanism continued to benefit from the excellent cooperation of the Governments of Jordan and Turkey. Mechanism monitoring is further supported by additional monitoring mechanisms in place for the delivery of cross-border assistance. The Organization provides to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic a 48-hour notice for all shipments. Once in the country, the United Nations partners that deliver aid ensure that shipments arrive at warehouses. Independent third-party companies contracted by the Organization ensure independent verification of the assistance arriving at the warehouse of the NGO and further monitor the distribution and/or service provision of the assistance.

Figure IV

Number of beneficiaries assisted by the United Nations and its partners by cluster through cross-border humanitarian deliveries, September 2017

(Thousands)

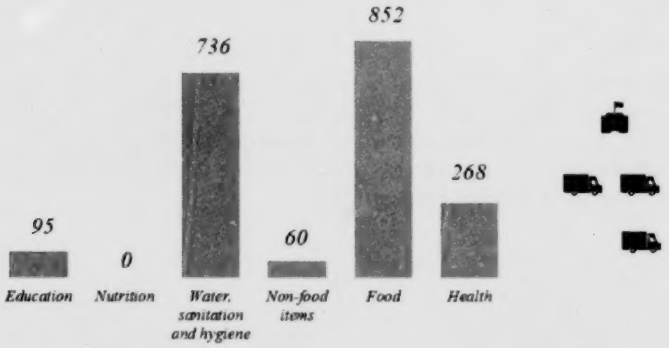


Table 4
Inter-agency cross-line humanitarian convoys in September 2017

Date	*Location*	*Requested target (number of beneficiaries)*	*Number of beneficiaries reached*	*Type of assistance*
6 September	Fu'ah and Kafraya	12 000	7 000	Multisectoral
6 September	Yarmouk	11 050	2 000	Multisectoral
23 September	East Harasta	18 500	12 250	Multisectoral
23 September	Misraba	14 000	9 750	Multisectoral
23 September	Mudayra	4 500	3 000	Multisectoral

31. During the reporting period, WHO, UNICEF and their implementing partners launched the second round of the measles vaccination campaign. The campaign was implemented in schools in coordination with the Syrian Ministry of Health and the Syrian Ministry of Education. Special guidelines were followed in hard-to-reach areas in coordination with the Syrian Arab Crescent. The effort reached all governorates, except Idlib and Raqqah, where local authorities did not agree on the implementation of the campaign. The activity targeted children from 6 to 12 years of age enrolled in schools, as well as drop-out children from the first round of the campaign in May, with an estimated target of 3,364,755 children. The vaccines were procured by UNICEF and distributed to all governorates in coordination with the Ministry of Health. Preliminary results indicate that 2,286,861 children were reached during the campaign (with a coverage rate of 63 per cent). Information on eastern Ghutah and Dayr al-Zawr is still pending, as the measles campaign was extended in those locations for an additional week for security reasons.

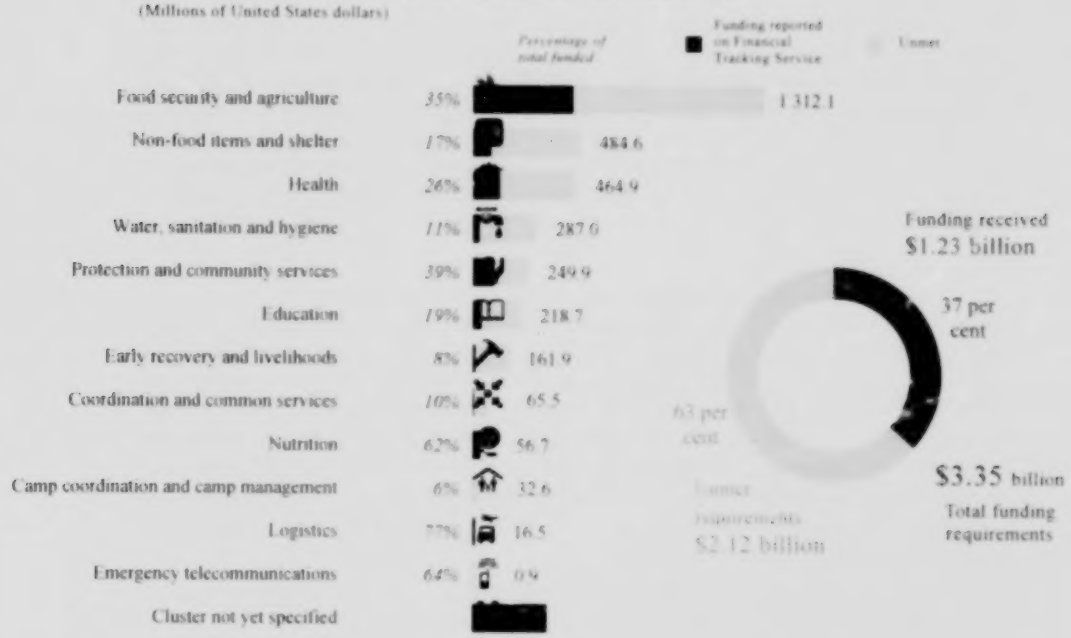
32. In late July, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) started the third round of its cash assistance programme for 2017, which concluded on 14 September. During that period, 408,787 Palestine refugees received cash assistance covering two months' worth of aid. In addition, the third round of the Agency's food assistance programme is ongoing, with more than 147,529 Palestine refugees having already received food parcels.

33. Throughout September, the Russian Federation sent to the United Nations information bulletins from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, which outlined the provision of bilateral relief assistance. Other Member States also continued to provide bilateral and other forms of humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian financing

34. As at 27 September, the humanitarian response plan for the Syrian Arab Republic was 36.8 per cent funded, with $1.23 billion of $3.35 billion received under the plan. The largest donor continues to be Germany ($313 million). The United States and the European Union have also provided more than $100 million in aid each ($172 million and $115 million, respectively).

Figure V
Humanitarian response plan funding, 27 September 2017



Visas and registrations

35. A total of 67 new United Nations visa requests were submitted to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in September. Of those, 25 were approved in September, 1 was denied and 41 remain pending. Of the 131 new visa applications submitted in earlier months, 91 were approved in the past few months, 30 remain pending and 10 were denied. Moreover, a total of 73 United Nations visa renewal requests were submitted in September, of which 49 were approved and 24 remain pending. An additional 25 requests for visa renewals submitted in earlier months were also approved and none remain pending.

36. A total of 23 international NGOs are registered with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to operate in the country. Moreover, some 220 national NGOs are authorized by the Syrian Arab Republic to operate through 315 branches countrywide. That figure represents an increase of three national NGOs which are authorized by the Syrian Arab Republic to partner with certain agencies of the United Nations system.

Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and premises

37. Since the start of the conflict, dozens of humanitarian workers have been killed, including 21 staff members of the United Nations or agencies of the United Nations system, of whom 17 were UNRWA staff members, 65 were staff members and volunteers of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and 8 were staff members and volunteers of the Palestine Red Crescent Society. In addition, many staff members of international and national NGOs are reported to have been killed.

38. A total of 27 staff members of agencies and programmes of the United Nations system (1 staff member of the United Nations Development Programme and 26 UNRWA staff members) are detained or missing.

III. Observations

39. I welcome the persistent and determined efforts of the Astana guarantors and other Member States to reduce violence in the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the renewed heavy fighting, including airstrikes, witnessed during September demonstrates the precarious security situation on the ground. I strongly reemphasize that there is no military solution to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. It remains essential to ensure that de-escalation arrangements realize their potential to create conditions conducive to United Nations-facilitated negotiations guided by Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012.

40. There is also an expectation that progress in de-escalation will result in increased humanitarian access. The increase in access has yet to be realized, with only 34,000 people reached through inter-agency cross-line convoys in September. That figure represents less than 3 per cent of those individuals for whom access was requested in August and September. The inability to reach those individuals in need, owing largely to bureaucratic impediments as well as insecurity, shows the importance of preserving all possible humanitarian access modalities. Cross-border assistance, as authorized under Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) and subsequent resolutions, continues to be a critical element of the humanitarian response in the Syrian Arab Republic.

41. There are millions of people in need in the north-west and southern areas of the Syrian Arab Republic that are regularly reached by cross-border deliveries. United Nations deliveries ensure that those populations are consistently reached. The humanitarian nature of cross-border assistance is verified by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism and its deliveries are confirmed on the ground by third-party monitors. United Nations humanitarian deliveries are further augmented by humanitarian partners and, importantly, their work to provide essential basic services, such as emergency education and health services, to populations that would otherwise be left without any such assistance. It is vital that the modalities set out under resolution 2165 (2014) and subsequent resolutions be renewed before their expiration on 10 January 2018 in order to ensure that those persons in need in the north-western and southern areas of the Syrian Arab Republic continue to be regularly reached with life-saving assistance.

42. I remain deeply concerned about the reported harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure throughout the country. Civilians must be spared and protected. I reiterate my call that all those conducting military operations in the Syrian Arab Republic must do so in compliance with international humanitarian law. The obligation to spare civilians and civilian objects remains for those fighting ISIL.

43. During the high-level week of the General Assembly in September, my Special Envoy for Syria and I had a range of contacts and consultations with Syrian, regional and international stakeholders. During those interactions, my Special Envoy stressed that de-escalation arrangements must not lead to a de facto partition of the Syrian Arab Republic and emphasized that genuine negotiations in Geneva on the political future of the Syrian Arab Republic were key to averting that scenario.

44. Accountability is central to sustainable peace. I reiterate my call that the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic be referred to the International Criminal Court. I also call upon all Member States, all parties to the conflict, civil society and the United Nations system as a whole to cooperate fully with the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

45. I support the intention of my Special Envoy to convene the eighth round of intra-Syrian talks in Geneva as soon as possible, to be guided by Security Council resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué. Ultimately, an inclusive political process convened under the auspices of the United Nations, together with the backing of the international community, is the only course that can provide a lasting solution to the Syrian conflict and bring an end to the tremendous suffering of the Syrian people.

Annex

Incidents affecting civilians recorded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in September 2017[1]

Rif Dimashq and Damascus governorates

- On 5 September, several ground-based strikes hit a residential area in the western part of Misraba. Shortly thereafter, ground-based strikes hit the area again, reportedly killing six civilians and wounding at least four other civilians.
- On 9 September, a boy was allegedly hit by a sniper in the eastern part of Harasta, near Duma.
- On 11 September, in the morning, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in Mudayra and allegedly killed 3 civilians, including a child, and wounded at least 12 other civilians, including women.
- On 13 September, a hospital in Kafr Batna was hit by a ground-based strike, allegedly injuring a woman who was receiving medical care, and partly damaging the facility.
- On 14 September, a journalist was reportedly shot in the cross-fire between non-State armed opposition groups in the northern part of Hamuriyah. The journalist was transported to a field hospital but reportedly died on 16 September.
- On 17 September, clashes reportedly erupted between non-State armed opposition groups in the vicinity of a checkpoint in Kafr Batna. At least two civilians were allegedly hit by bullets in the cross-fire; one reportedly died.
- On 18 September, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in Duma, reportedly killing a girl and injuring several other civilians.
- On 24 September, several ground-based strikes hit a residential area in Duma, causing a fire in a building in Humayrah which reportedly killed one child and wounded another, who died on 26 September.
- On 25 September, armed clashes between non-State armed opposition groups and government forces in the area of Ayn Tarma allegedly killed a male nurse, who was reportedly hit by a stray bullet when he was standing near the medical facility where he worked.
- On 26 September, ground-based strikes hit residential areas in Harasta, reportedly killing a male civilian and injuring several other civilians.
- On the same day, three airstrikes allegedly hit residential areas in Duma and allegedly killed a boy and another civilian, and injured scores of others. Reportedly, airstrikes hit a centre for persons with disabilities located in Duma, killing two disabled male civilians.

[1] In line with Security Council resolution 2258 (2015), the present description of developments on the ground and the incidents that occurred during the month that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been able to corroborate, relates to compliance with Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014) and 2191 (2014) by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The information is provided without prejudice to the work of the Task Force on the Cessation of Hostilities of the International Syria Support Group. The reporting is not a comprehensive listing of all violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of international human rights law that took place in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period.

Dar'a and Suwayda' governorates

- On 12 September, a journalist covering the military operations of the Southern Front was reportedly killed by a sniper in the opposition-controlled Dar'a city area of Dar'a al-Balad.
- On 24 September, ground-based strikes hit a residential area in Dar'a al-Balad, allegedly killing two civilians and injuring several others.
- On 25 September, ground-based strikes hit the government-controlled Dar'a neighbourhood of Sabil and allegedly killed a child. The same day, ground-based strikes hit Dar'a al-Balad, reportedly killing a woman and injuring at least two other civilians.

Idlib governorate

- On 18 September, three individuals previously sentenced to death by a Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham-run court in Sarmin for the killing of the seven White Helmet volunteers in August were publicly executed by the group.
- On 19 September, several airstrikes hit a maternity and paediatrics hospital in Haysh subdistrict, reportedly killing a female cleaning staff and injuring 3 medical staff (the hospital director and 2 female nurses) as well as 10 patients.
- On 19 September, airstrikes hit a hospital in Khan Shaykhun city, allegedly injuring one civilian and causing significant damage, including the destruction of generators and critical medical material. Two ambulances parked next to the hospital were also destroyed.
- On 19 September, the National Hospital of Kafr Nubl and a White Helmet centre were also hit; the hospital sustained significant material damage.
- On the same day, a male civilian who was standing next to a medical unit in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man was reportedly killed when an airstrike hit the facility.
- On 20 September, several airstrikes hit residential areas in Jarjanaz town, in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, as well as Abu Bakr Siddik mosque, reportedly killing six civilians, including a woman and her four children, and injuring five others.
- On 21 September, airstrikes hit a residential area in the western neighbourhood of Khan Shaykhun city, allegedly killing three civilians: a woman, her husband and their daughter. The victims were displaced from Khattab town in Hama governorate.
- On 21 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Khan Shaykhun city, reportedly killing 6 civilians (3 children and 3women) and injuring 15 others. Further airstrikes hit residential areas of Habit village, allegedly injuring three civilians, including a child.
- On 22 September airstrikes hit an agricultural area in Kafr Sajnah, in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, allegedly killing a six-year-old child.
- On 23 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Mardikh town in Saraqib, reportedly killing seven male civilians, six of whom were displaced from Darayya and one from Kafr Susah, in Damascus. The incident allegedly injured several others providing first response support when further airstrikes hit the same location.

- On 23 September, airstrikes hit agricultural lands in the eastern neighbourhood of Khan Shaykhun city, allegedly killing three civilians — two of them women from the same family — and injuring another woman.
- On 23 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Idlib city, reportedly killing a male civilian displaced from Mu'addamiyah al-Sham, in Rural Damascus governorate.
- On 24 September, airstrikes hit residential areas of Shaykh Sindiyan village, allegedly killing four civilians, including one woman.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit agricultural lands north of Khan Shaykhun, reportedly killing a pregnant woman and injuring five civilians, three of whom were women.
- On 25 September, airstrikes hit a market and residential areas in Jisr al-Shughur city, reportedly killing 19 civilians, including 4 women and 2 children, and injuring no fewer than 42 others, including women and children.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas southwest of Jisr al-Shughur, reportedly killing one woman and injuring five civilians, including two women, all from the same family.
- On the same day, air and ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Bdama, allegedly killing two civilians, including a boy, and injuring six civilians.
- On the same day, in the morning, airstrikes hit residential areas of Shanuriyah in Bdama subdistrict, reportedly killing a child and injuring four other civilians.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas in Bashiriyah, in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing three civilians (a woman and two civilian men from the same family) and injuring four other civilians, including three women.
- On the same day, in the morning, airstrikes hit residential areas of Kufayr village south of Jisr al-Shughur, reportedly killing two civilians (including one woman) and injuring three others.
- On 26 September in the morning, airstrikes hit residential areas in Qadiriyah-Qayqun in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing four civilians, including two boys, and injuring six others.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit a hospital west of Kafr Nubl. The hospital sustained significant material damage.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit a mosque in Bdama in Jisr al-Shughur, reportedly injuring six civilians and destroying the mosque.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas of Mishmishan village, in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing a civilian woman and injuring five other civilians.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas in Janudiyah town in Jisr al-Shughur, reportedly killing one male civilian and injuring six other civilians.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit an elementary school in Jisr al-Shughur city allegedly causing significant material damage. The school had not been operational.

- On the same day, airstrikes hit Sanjar subdistrict in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man in the morning, reportedly killing a civilian woman and injuring seven other civilians.
- On 27 September, airstrikes hit residential areas of Qanniyah village north of Jisr al-Shugur, allegedly injuring 14 civilians, 1 of whom was a woman.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas in Ya'qubiyah village north of Jisr al-Shughur, in the morning, reportedly killing a one-year-old girl.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit a medical facility in Bashiriyah in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly causing significant damage and putting it out of service.
- On 28 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Buzayt village in Jisr al-Shughur, reportedly killing two women.
- On the same day, airstrikes hit residential areas of the farming village of Hamu in Jisr al-Shughur, allegedly killing seven civilians (three women (one elderly), a girl and three boys).
- On 29 September, several airstrikes hit residential areas in Armanaz town in the evening, allegedly killing 28 civilians, including 7 women and 5 children.
- On 30 September, airstrikes hit residential areas of Salqin, reportedly killing 19 civilians, including 4 women, 7 boys and 4 girls, and injuring a number of other civilians.

Hama governorate

- On 21 September, ground-based strikes hit the Government-held area of Ruhjan, reportedly killing three civilians (two women and a child) who were attempting to cross from areas held by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) into other opposition-controlled areas in the north of the governorate.
- On 24 September, ground-based strikes hit Salamiyah in the afternoon, reportedly killing five civilians (two women and three children) from the same family and injuring two others, including a woman.
- On 26 September, ground-based strikes hit a group of internally displaced persons near the Wadi al-Athib area who were awaiting evacuation, reportedly killing at least 50 of them.

Dayr al-Zawr governorate

- On 10 September, airstrikes reportedly hit a crossing point in Bulil town, approximately 35 kilometres south-east of Dayr al-Zawr city, and allegedly killed 32 civilians and injured 9 others, including 2 women.
- On 14 September, airstrikes hit residential areas of Jdidat Bikara town in the morning, reportedly killing at least 15 civilians, including 3 women, and injuring at least 10 others.
- On 14 September, airstrikes hit residential areas as well as a hospital, medical centre and an Internet shop in the morning, in Mayadin city, reportedly killing at least 10 civilians, including 2 siblings, a girl and a boy. The United States-led coalition reported on 29 September that it had conducted airstrikes near Mayadin from 12 to 14 September, killing three senior ISIL officials.
- On 14 September, airstrikes hit the town of Khasham, reportedly killing nine civilians, including a woman and six children, four of whom were girls.

- On 14 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Lower Buqrus town, allegedly killing six civilians, including three girls and a woman, and injuring a number of others.
- On 14 September, airstrikes hit a crossing point in Tabiyat Shamiyah town, on the western bank of the river, reportedly killing five civilians, including two women.
- On 14 September, airstrikes hit a school hosting internally displaced persons in Zabari town, with no reports of civilian casualties.
- On 16 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Mahkan town, reportedly killing at least 12 civilians, including a father, a mother and a number of their children.
- On 16 September, airstrikes hit residential areas of Mayadin city, reportedly killing at least one woman and injuring another one, together with a number of children.
- On 16 September, airstrikes hit a crossing point in Bulil, killing at least five males, reported to be civilians, who were attempting to cross the river.
- On 17 September, ground-based strikes hit residential areas of Lower Khasham town, reportedly killing five women.
- On 17 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in Albu Kamal, reportedly killing eight civilians, including two women and four boys. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day, it had launched three strikes near Albu Kamal, engaging an ISIL tactical unit and destroying a logistics node and an ISIL headquarters.
- On 19 September, ground-based strikes hit Mazlum village in Khasham town, to the east of Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly killing seven civilians, including a woman and two of her children.
- On 25 September, airstrikes hit residential areas in ISIL-controlled Albu Kamal city, close to the Hanaa Hospital, in eastern rural Dayr al-Zawr, reportedly killing 11 civilians, including 3 women and 4 children. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day, it had launched one strike near Albu Kamal, destroying an ISIL staging area.

Raqqah governorate

- On 2 September, airstrikes hit the road next to Na'im Square in Raqqah city, reportedly killing three civilians, including a woman, all from the same family, as well as a pharmacist, his wife and his brother. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day, it had launched a total of 45 strikes near Raqqah, engaging 28 ISIL tactical units.
- On 4 September, in the morning, airstrikes hit residential areas of Raqqah city, reportedly killing nine civilians, including six women, and injuring a number of others. Most of the victims were from the same family. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day, it had launched a total of 41 strikes near Raqqah, engaging 17 ISIL tactical units.
- On 22 September, five civilians, including two women, from the same family, were reportedly killed as a result of gunfire while attempting to leave Raqqah city. The victims were originally from Dayr al-Zawr. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day it had launched a total of 39 strikes near Raqqah, engaging three ISIL tactical units.

- On 26 September, airstrikes hit a residential building in the ISIL-controlled neighbourhood of Badu in Raqqah city and allegedly killed at least 41 civilians, including 14 women and 9 children, and injured at least 7 other civilians. The United States-led coalition publicly announced that on the same day, it had launched a total of 42 strikes near Raqqah, engaging 16 ISIL tactical units.